LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

THE SECOND DAY.

27th February, 1912.

The Assembly met at 11. A. M. on Tuesday, the 27th February 1912.

The consideration of the subjects, as per the list distributed to the Members on the previous day, was begun.

I. Finance.

SUBJECTS.

1. A fair, equitable and efficient administration of the State finances.

Mr. A. Govinda Menon, B. A. (Member, Parur taluk) after thanking the Government for the successful administration of the State finances for the last four years, observed that, though on the whole, the distribution of the revenue under the various heads of expenditure has been made more or less in accordance with the needs and requirements of the times, yet there still remained many defects to be remedied and many reforms to be introduced to suit the requirements of the country. He dealt with the subject under four heads.

Firstly, he made the following proposals as regards *the machinery of the Administration*, so as to give to the people some real and substantial share in the administration of the revenue. They were (*a*) that the Assembly should be made a responsible body, so that the respresentations made by the Members should be given due weight and consideration, especially in shaping the financial policy of the Government, (*b*) that the annual Budget be framed, so far as possible, in accordance with the representations of the Assembly, (*c*) that the Budget so framed should be submitted for the discussion and approval of the Legislative Council, which should be so constituted as to have a non-official majority in it. reserving however, at present, a power of veto to the Government, and (*d*) that Representative Boards, with non-official majorities, be established in every district and taluk and these Boards be given control and supervision over the allotments for Elementary Education, Sanitation, Minor Public Works, including irrigation and the maintenance of roads and canals.

Secondly, he dealt with the *distribution of the State Revenue*. The Member said that, as affairs stood at present, the distribu-

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tion of the revenue under the various items is done, in many cases, without carefully looking into the needs and wants of the people in the different parts of the State. Agriculture was starved, education was made dearer, and no attention was paid to agricultural irrigation of a protective character in Middle and North Travancore. He therefore suggested (a) that, for the improvement of the agricultural industry of the State and for helping the needy agriculturists, allotments should be made for the establishment of agricultural schools and farms, of co-operative credit societies, and of grain banks in the principal centres of the State, and that the Agricultural Loans Act should be modified in such a way as to make it easy for the people to borrow under the provisions of the Act, (b) that increased allotments be made for grants in aid of Elementary and Secondary Education, and of Industrial and Technical Education, and (c) that sufficient allotment be made for the supply of medicines in the hospitals, as the cry about the inadequacy of the supply of medicines has been going on for the past few years.

Thirdly, he urged the necessity of reform and retrenchment in the P. W. D, the Forest, and the Devaswom Departments. In the opinion of the Member, the present staff of the P. W. D. was more than what was required, and a reduction in this direction could be made if the P. W. D. control was limited to major works only, *i. e.*, works over Rs. 20,000, works under that amount being left to the control of the District and the Taluk Boards, which, he recommended, should be created. With regard to the Forest Department, he said that the cost of working down the timber was about 75 % of the real value of the timber, and he suggested that means should be devised for curtailing the cost. The collection of minor produce by the department, the Member understood, was tried as an experimental measure at Malayattur, and, in his opinion, the adoption of the system throughout the State would result in an appreciable gain to the Government. The existing contract system of the sale of timber prevented the people from getting good timber, and even the Government had to go for the purchase of the timber they wanted elsewhere. This should be discontinued. Now there was a large stock of timber in the depots due to stocking at improper seasons of the year. Such evils might be remedied by directing the contractors to deliver timber at stated times and at stated places. It was highly necessary that the department should be worked efficiently at a minimum cost. He also stated that the waste of revenue in the Devaswom Department should be put an end to by reforming the same.

Lastly, he suggested that the annual instalment of *vilayartham* levied from the *kuthakapattom* tenants of

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the Paliport farm be collected in as many instalments as there were kist months in the year, and also that non-agricultural income beyond a certain limit be taxed.

He concluded by inviting the attention of the Government to the hardship caused to the people by the levy of tolls, and on the desirability of connecting the proposed Quilon-Trivandrum Railway with Alwaye, provided it did not impair the financial stability of the State.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

2. With a view to facilitate transactions, the value of the current coins of the State should be adjusted in such a way as to make their exchange into British coins easy.

Mr. M. M. Verghese (Member, Kottayam Trading Classes) said that the coins which passed for legal tender in a State must be such as could be exchanged with ease, and the Travancore coins offered difficulties in the matter of mutual exchange. The Travancore Rupee was a coin which existed only in imagination and on paper. The difficulty in converting Travancore coins into British currency was causing considerable vexation and inconvenience to the people, especially to those who had commercial dealings with the outside world. To remedy this difficulty, he suggested (1) that the Sircar Rupee might be done away with, (2) only the British Rupee, Travancore Chackram and Cash might pass for legal tender hereafter, and (3) the British Rupee be valued at Chs 32 and 1 Chakaram at 12 cash. The temporary inconvenience which might be experienced by the Audit Department in adopting the new system of currency, when compared to the lasting benefits derived, was nothing.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

Removal of the difficulties often experienced by the public with regard to the Travancore silver coins.

Mr. Ramaswami Meenakshi Chettiar (Member, Nagercoil Trading Classes) said that the silver coins in the State were dissimilar as regards impression and weight and that considerable difficulties were being experienced by the people in the matter of exchanging them. They were refused in the markets; and in the treasuries, whence they had been originally disbursed, they were returned defaced. The supply of copper coins was insufficient to meet the demand. The Member proposed the following remedial measures :—

(1) That prompt action should be taken by the Police and other officers to check the spread of counterfeit coins.

(2) That only experienced men should be appointed in the Mint and new machines be obtained to manufacture coins without any difference in value or weight.

(3) That copper coins should be supplied on a large scale.

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